

There was no question about it

Duxbury votes to buy Camp Wing, other land for conservation

By Jennifer Arthur
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DUXBURY — While there are 9,494 registered voters in town, it took only 859 of them to spend \$2.2 million dollars at Saturday's special election. Four ballot questions, asking the town to buy 375 acres of conservation land, passed easily.

According to town clerk Nancy Oates, residents were "nonchalant" about voting for the Proposition 2½ override that was necessary to purchase the lands. Two weeks ago, voters at a widely attended special town meeting unanimously decided to send the purchases to a Proposition 2½ override ballot vote.

On Question 1, 793 voted "yes" to override Proposition 2½ to buy the 354-acre Camp Wing property, while 61 voted "no."

Meanwhile, state secretary of environmental affairs Trudy Coxe visited the Cushman Preserve Saturday to announce the town will receive \$500,000 in matching funds for the Camp Wing deal. The announcement was made at the 25th annual meeting of Wildlands Trust board members. The grant is one of three Scenic and Natural Diversity Program (SAND) awards to Duxbury, Kingston and Falmouth.

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In addition to Camp Wing, voters also said "yes" to buying land on Summer Street, Union Street and Mayflower Street.

The estimated increase on the average property tax bill per year will be \$33.

The \$500,000 award that will help pay for Camp Wing will reduce its cost to the town to about \$1 million. Inhabiting Camp Wing are three documented, state-listed species — the spotted turtle, the American bittern and smartweed.

"The growth pressures in this area are so great.... On behalf of the governor, keep up your good work," Coxe said when delivering the check. "There is a reformation, I think, occurring across the commonwealth and particularly in this region, with town after town now coming forward and supporting (Proposi-

tion) 2½ overrides."

After accepting the check along with selectman John Tuffy and town manager Rocco Longo, selectman Margaret Kearney said, "I just want to tell everyone here how excited we are to get this grant. We have been working very hard."

Kearney went on to thank town officials, the Camp Wing board, and the Duxbury Friends of Conservation.

Coxe thanked Mark Primack, executive director of the Wildlands Trust and a Duxbury resident, for being a "fabulous advocate for open space protection for this area. They were really one of the people that we went to for the development of SAND. I can't help but commend him to all of you and thank him publicly in front of all of you for his wonderful help and

assistance for all our efforts."

Primack warned of the danger to natural tracts of open space.

"This region is at a turning point... A region that is the oldest settled landscape in America is at risk," he said.

This has been a successful year for the Wildlands Trust because it has increased its holdings by 200 acres.

"The trust is becoming a major regional force," trust president Samuel Chapin said.

The trust presented Coxe with the LeBaron R. Briggs conservation award for her efforts. The award was also presented to Herb and Polly Emilson. The trust also announced the formation of the Stewardship Endowment for stewardship of properties.